

Ashland Trail Strategy Outline

VISION STATEMENT– An initial vision for the Ashland Watershed Trails was expressed by the recreation staff. Basically the vision was “a safe, family-oriented trail system that meets the needs of the users and protects resources.” It would be useful for agency personnel and trail coalition to work together to develop a more formal vision statement that both parties can support. The vision statement should accurately capture the thoughts and ideas of agency and trail coalition members as it will guide future efforts.

It would be useful to develop a general partnership agreement such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Trails Coalition. Key Forest Service (FS) personnel should be involved in the MOU formulation so that there is a clear explanation of what the FS needs are. The MOU would clearly address the goals and objectives for both the Forest Service and the Trails Coalition. The MOU could be the basis for future formal agreements (Challenge Cost Share Agreements, Collection Agreements) that would outline the responsibilities for the agency and the coalition at various junctures in the process of getting a trails system on the ground.

ASSESSMENT – Trails Unlimited (TU) completed the assessment which was a basic inventory and recommendations for new trails, trail extensions and trail closures where appropriate. The Assessment needs to be reviewed by the Trails Coalition as well as internal Forest Service resource specialists. Based on this review there may be changes made to the assessment.

COLLABORATION WITH THE PUBLIC – The Trail Coalition can play a major role at this stage. They can explain the assessment (above) to the general public. They can be ambassadors for the planned trail system. Ideally there would be at least one Forest Service “champion” and one Trail Coalition “champion” that would act to facilitate the process and ensure the Forest Service stay on a timeline.

RESOURCES – At this stage a informal review would be done by Forest Service resource specialists. Recreation specialists would complete the Trail Management Objectives (TMOs) for the trail system or they could be completed by volunteers (Trail Coalition) under the direction of the Recreation specialist or they could be completed through a Forest Enterprise Team such as Trails Unlimited. The biologists, archeologists and other specialists would recommend any changes to the assessment and complete preliminary documents, reviews or assessments, as needed, or these could also be contracted.

PROJECT PROPOSAL – Project proposal or proposals would be divided between phases and proposal outlining specific trails, by location, to be constructed or deleted, and cost estimates associated with each. Funding needs and project narrative would be outlined in the project proposal. An implementation schedule will outline the stages and priorities for the construction. A signage component would be part of a project proposal. When the project proposal and associated estimates are completed then the environmental assessment process can begin.

IMPLEMENTATION – The implementation plan would answer the question who, what, where, when and how. Implementation could address any of the following elements: funding for environmental assessment and construction, staff, approvals, signing, trails and trailheads, closures.

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE – A detailed O&M Plan is needed before the trail system is completed.

EVALUATION – Forest Service and partners would perform periodic evaluations to ensure the Vision is still relevant and other goals and objectives are being met.